Lonely Lights.

THE LONELY FIGHTERS.

1 Cor.9:26 So fight I.

All the great figures are lonely figures. Not isolated and separated from their fellows, but possessing within their souls a hidden, unshared Spirit out of which arises the hero, the man ready for the hour to meet the world's need.

We are now watching and studying the greatest of all such, conquering his own soul in Gethsemene and then enduring the trials and suffering the shame-cross of a maddened world that he might burst the tomb of human despaor and give to humanity the Easter sunshine of everlasting life.

The Apostle Paul was such a figure and we take from him our text-So fight I.

Not only are all the great men of history lonely fighters, but we all must face the vital issues of life alone. When the crisis of our lives comes, noone can decide for us- we must fight it out alone. The encouragement and advice and experience of our friends can lead us so far, but not all the way. And since the very strength of our character depends upon our ability to fight victoriously alone, it will be profitable to consider some of the eppeiences of the great outstanding fighters of human history.

I. The Pioneer. The beginnings of all things worth while is the work of the Pioneer. The man who dares to leave the beaten track and venture into the unknown to gain for the world a richer, fuller experience of Truth.

It takes a great inner courage to leave the places of habitation for the wilderness and desert. Courageous indeed is the fighter who takes his stand agaiamst the majorities.

To be sure there is a monument for all such, but not until long after the fighter is dead.

But such refusal to accept the decision of the crowd marks the emancipation of one's soul. In that hour there is bitter loneliness, but a victory which establishes th creative integrity of the fighter's soul. "So fight I", said Paul. "So fight we all of us" say the pioneers all down the years.

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II. The Pilgrim. The pioneer breaks with human experien the pilgrim is loyal to human experience.

As there is a touch of the pioneer in all great men,

so there is also a touch of the pilgrim. The great realities of life become our noblest sanctities, our shrines to which we pilgrim our way and at which we offer the supreme devotions of our lives.

Ah, but you say, the whole world worships at its shrines, then where is the lonelinessof the pilgrim? It is one thing to be marching along with the pildrim crowd, but it is another thing to carry with you the pilgrim heart. There is a vast difference between the light, superficial worship of the masses and the devotion of the lonely fighter. The crowd accepts the stone and the ivy clinging to it as the temple, the lonely pilgrim has in mind and heart the hidden, spiritual realities for which the temple stands.

So great is this difference that when Jesus said that he came not to destroy but to fulfill he was entirely misunderstood. And again when he predicted the rebuilding of the temple in three days again he was misunderstood. Yes, a true pilgrim is a lonely fighter.

III. The lonely fighter is also a prophet. The pioneering which brings him to the new and the pilgrimaging which keeps the old new and living are given their profoundest significance to the ~~f~~ lonely fighter in his consciousness of the presence of God.

Hebrew religion reached its noblest heights in the achievements of their prophets. Men of God who visioned the will of God to their people. And their theirs was a lonely and terrible conflict whose victory was not achieved until long after their passing.

The call of the prophet comes to everyone of us. "Your ~~sons~~ sons and your daughters shall prophecy" It is the practiced presence of God in the lives of true believers which keeps ~~it~~ty alive in the world. And such practice is the exercise of the lonely fighter who in his own soul communed with God and receives thekindling of the Spirit.

IV. The lonely fighter is also a Patriot. A great lover of his country, who is lifted far above the popular loyalty of "My country right or wrong" to where he dares to tell his country the truth his country ought to hear. The man who loves his native land enough to be its conscience and guide. The man who best serves his country by trying to make it a serving country working for the best interests of all humanity.

So fight I, as a pioneer ever seeking in larger measure the truth of God that makes us free;
so fight I as pilgrim, ever worshipful of the great realities of human experience that link us to God and make us one in Jesus Christ;
so fight I as prophet, in the consciousness of oneness with God and as in the very presence of God, with soul aflame with the Spirit of God, empowered by God to fight for righteousness and truth.

so fight I, as patriot awakening my country to such a full sense of obligation and service to the rest of the world as to kindle aflame the spirit of true brotherhood and liberty in the heart of all humanity.

Shall we not reply to Paul's "So fight I" with "So fight we all of us"?